

# EXHIBIT A

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK  
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JENNIFER HOUGH,

*Plaintiff,*

-- against--

Docket No. 21-cv-04568-ENV-JRC

ONIKA TANJA MARAJ, AKA (“NICKI  
MARAJ” and KENNETH PETTY, AKA  
(“ZOO”).

**Declaration of Onika Tanja Maraj**

*Defendant.*

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ONIKA TANYA MARAJ declares under penalty of perjury pursuant to 28 U.S.C.  
§ 1746, that the following is true and correct.

1. I am a defendant in this case.
2. I am advised that Plaintiff has filed an Affidavit of Service from a process server who claims that my husband and I were served because he personally handed the Summons and Complaint to my husband, who he describes as a “Black Male, 40 Years Old, 200 lbs. black hair, brown eyes.”
3. The process server is not telling the truth, as this never happened. In fact, my husband is approximately 5’9” tall and weighs no more than 175 pounds. Further, there is no person who resides in our house or who was present there on September 15, 2021, who fits the description contained in the Affidavit of Service

4. My failure to respond to the Complaint by the date which Plaintiff claims was my last date to do so was the product of series of innocent miscommunications:

- a. After learning about the Complaint, I sought out recommendations for a lawyer in New York;
- b. On September 22, 2021, Mr. Burstein was recommended to me and we met on a Zoom conference the next evening;
- c. At the end of that conference, I believed that I had agreed to Mr. Burstein representing me, and I told him to work out the financial details with my manager, Angela Kukawski;
- d. From that point on, I believed that Mr. Burstein was my lawyer and that I would hear from him when he needed to speak with me. I note that I have not had extensive experience with court cases and I did not know that I was at risk of a default while waiting to hear from Mr. Burstein.
- e. I did not learn until October 12, when I received papers concerning a default, that Ms. Kukawski had not understood that I had approved Mr. Burstein as my lawyer and therefore he had not been retained.
- f. Mr. Burstein was not available to speak with me until the evening of October 12, at which time the misunderstanding was cleared up and Mr. Burstein agreed to represent me upon approval of a retainer agreement and the payment of his advance retainer.

5. My failure to respond to the Complaint was the product of an innocent mistake, and I ask the Court to excuse the delay so that I can defend what I believe to be an entirely

frivolous case which Plaintiff's counsel has brought against me in an effort to use my name to generate publicity for himself.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on October 14, 2021 in the State of New York, New York County.

DocuSigned by:  
  
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